

# Agknowledge

February, 1992

## Extension staff Rediscover Ukrainian

While 19 visiting Ukrainian farmers were finishing their visit with Prairie farm families this past fall, two Alberta Agriculture specialists were polishing their Ukrainian.

Planning a three-day farm management workshop to be taught in Ukrainian was the assignment for **Alex Ostapiuk**, farm management economist in Olds, but not his biggest challenge.

My challenge was to find teammates with the appropriate level of subject matter knowledge and experience, adult education and communication skills in speaking, reading and writing in Ukrainian," says Ostapiuk.

With the help of **Ralph Berkan**, Ostapiuk chose regional home economist **Edith Zawadiuk** for the position, who happily accepted the invitation. Mike Pylypchuk, farm management economist with the Saskatchewan farm management branch was the other member of the teaching trio.

The three-day course, held November 20-22 in Saskatoon, focused on topics from family budgeting, to how much debt a hectare of land can carry.

The visiting farmers are part of the Canada-Ukraine Farmers' Exchange Program designed by Edmonton's Grant McEwan Community College. Ukrainian farmers come to Canada to be exposed to Western technology, farming techniques and farm

management in preparation for the eventual break-up of Ukrainian collective farms, says Ostapiuk.

Some of the farmers' main concerns revolved around land acquisition says Ostapiuk. "I heard questions about: 'How much should I pay for a hectare of land?' or 'What methods exist for obtaining use of assets?'" he says.

"Not knowing what to expect, we found the workshop climate was surprisingly open and flowed very well," he adds. "There was no hesitation on anyone's part to ask a question, give an example or make a comment."

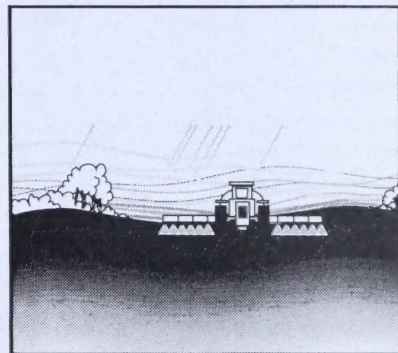
As for the challenge of speaking Ukrainian the trio felt they communicated the course effectively.

"Edith speaks Ukrainian very fluently," says Ostapiuk, "I tried to be honest with the group when it came to certain words I had forgotten," says Zawadiuk. "Rather than calling a spade a spade, you'd explain it as a tool you use to dig with!"

"We both agreed that after each day of speaking we would literally feel the fatigue in our bones," he says. But what the course took out of Ostapiuk and Zawadiuk, the participants eagerly took in.

At the end of the conference Ostapiuk says he asked a collective farm chief economist and a chief agronomist why they wanted to farm. "They responded with 'to feed our people', and then 'to strengthen our country'." He then asked them again, "Why do YOU REALLY want to farm?"

"They looked at each other and simultaneously said 'to be free'. They shook each other's hand congratulating each other at coming to such an important realization at the same time."



## An Arm for Pesticide Protection

The agriculture industry doesn't take a back seat to anything—especially when it comes to pesticide safety.

Working from this base the department developed the Farmer Pesticide Certificate Program.

"Participants of this program," says **Keith Price**, head of crop protection branch, "will learn about pesticide safety, toxicology, protective clothing, pesticide application, and environmental protection, to name just a few."

In the fall of 1990, the department, along with Olds College and a number of industry sponsors, set out to begin planning a course to reinforce the safety message. The course's roots are in a concern that proper safety

(cont'd on page 3)



# From Region to Region

## 'Aggies' tour Northeast region

**D**iversified may be one way to describe the agricultural sector in north east Alberta, but Alberta Agriculture staff from Region IV wanted to show that diversification first-hand to University of Alberta Agriculture students.

As a core requirement to obtain their degree, 35 third and fourth year Aggies from Ag/For 304 travelled eastward to see just what this diversification was all about.

A wide spectrum of tour locations were set up for the students, says **Jeff Beckingham**, Vegreville's district agriculturist and one of the tour organizers. "The first morning featured facilities such as Holgerson Dairies to Circle M Trout farm," says Beckingham.

Soils specialist **Grant Gillund**, along with Stanislaw sand-blasters manager Alexis Machura hosted a review of local soils research projects, complete with an opportunity to 'dig in the dirt'.

"It was a great opportunity not only for the students," says Beckingham, "but for Alberta Agriculture staff as well. It takes team work to put an event like this together." Other department staff members involved were district agriculturists **Don Lobay**, Two Hills, **Terry Holmgren**, St. Paul, **Don Christensen**, Smoky Lake, and regional director **Ralph Berken**.

Overall, the Aggies gave the day a thumbs up. Says one student, "Coming from a non-rural background, it was good for me to see such diverse facilities".

## Bank Bean Bonus

**A**lberta Agriculture staff in Medicine Hat organized the distribution of 2350 pounds of dry beans to food banks in Lethbridge,



Alberta Agriculture staff take time during a busy tour to pose with this group of U of A 'Aggies'.

Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Calgary and Edmonton.

"It was all made possible with beans and labour donated by Alberta Pulse Growers' Commission, trucking by Medalta Transport, cleaning by Alberta Wheat Pool, bags by Taber Seed Cleaning Co-op, and "go-fer" work by region one staff," says **Don Young**, region I director.

*Editor's note: Edmonton Staff also received a heartfelt thanks from the Edmonton Food Bank for their Contributions over the holiday season.*

## Career Connection



Alberta Agriculture received recognition recently for its 10-year participation in Lethbridge Community College's career fair "Liaison - Your Career Connection." **Don Wentz**, provincial soils salinity specialist, Lethbridge (l) accepted the plaque on behalf of the Department from College President Dr. Donna Allen. With more than 2,500 visitors and students in attendance, and 108 exhibitors, 'Liaison' is the largest career fair in Western Canada.

## Regional Recycling

**A**lthough his trips into Edmonton are few and far between, **Mark George** manages to keep Fairview's own recycling program alive.

Since there are no paper recycling bins located in Fairview, this regional soil conservation agrologist has taken it upon himself to pick up the recycled paper at Fairview's provincial and district offices, Farm Credit Corporation, Alberta Hail and Crop Insurance, Public Lands and Culture and the town of Fairview office and trucks it into the paper recycling bins at the J.G. O'Donoghue building in Edmonton.

"I only have a 3/4 ton long box truck," says George, "which only use to take 15 minutes to unload. Now, with the overwhelming participation, unloading takes up to almost an hour."

## 911 Error

**A**re you aware that approximately 50 provincial employees dial 911 every week by mistake?

This tends to happen when an employee, wanting to use the WATTS 118 or Calgary 116 service mistakenly thinks one must dial '9' for an outside line. Once the caller realizes the mistake, they usually hang up, leaving the emergency operator unsure whether there is an emergency. Please help in eliminating this problem so emergency operators are left to deal with real emergencies.



(Cont'd from page 1)

precautions are often ignored when potentially harmful chemicals are being used, especially during busy periods. "Safety must be a priority," says Price.

"A unique aspect of this project is the number of department staff and organizations involved in its delivery. For example, two videos were produced by **German Vidal**, broadcast media producer to supplement the written lessons.

"Field services staff also play a major part of this program—they are its delivery arm," says Price.

The first pilot of the certificate program took place on November 25 and 26 in Ponoka with DHE **Holly Pidzarko**, DA **Brian Cameron** and agriculture fieldman Maurice Moore as its first instructors.

"It's important to note we were more like facilitators, than instructors," says Pidzarko. "The nine modules are set up in a workbook format, with a guided self-study approach. We did, however, incorporate our extension skills when leading discussions, answering questions and summarizing the subject manner."

All 14 participants in the pilot group passed the exam. A 75 per cent mark is required to pass and receive the certificate.

The first participants gave the program a positive evaluation. "Course attendees said the first thing they would change, is wearing better protective clothing, and the way they took care of the clothing. It's a very positive start," says **Bertha Eggertson**, provincial clothing and textiles specialist, who was a member of the program's steering committee.

The program's workbook was revised as a result of feedback from that first course, and is ready to go out to the first set of students. Price is expecting over 4,000 Albertans will take the course in the next year.

"The work, time and money will all be worthwhile if Albertans use pesticides better and safer. The result will be a cleaner, healthier place to live and work," says Price.

## Calving Clinic for Cowgirls

A hunch turned out to be a good bet for a Grande Prairie DA.

**Cathie Erichsen** felt given current economic conditions on many farms, that more husbands would be working off the farm. This, in turn, would leave many inexperienced wives with the responsibility of looking after the cow herd this spring.

Working on her hunch, Erichsen, along with Dr. **Jim Henderson**, head of the regional veterinary diagnostics lab, designed a calving clinic for cowgirls.

"I had originally seen the idea for this clinic in other areas of the province," says Erichsen, "but the reason why I knew it would work was from my experience as DA in Spirit River. The community there had been hit with back-to-back floods and crop failure, which meant most men going to work away from the home."

Three wintry days in December 1991 saw more than 135 "cowgirl" attendees, along with a few brave men, participating in the course taught by Dr. Henderson.

"Cathie's assessment of the need for a presentation of this nature appeared to be right on," says Dr. Henderson. "Audiences at all three presentations were very interested and attentive. They all appeared to feel the presentation was of significant benefit."

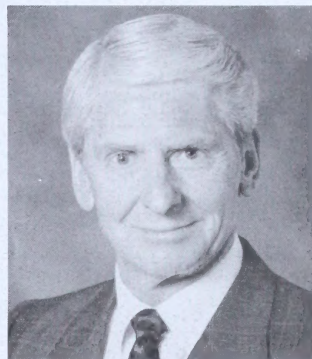
The half-day-long course was divided into six topics including signs of impending calving, physiology of normal labour handling various types of difficult labour.

"We had participants who had 25 years of experience, to those who had just bought their first herd," says Erichsen.

"But the most common comment from participants was do it again next year."

And that's what will happen early in this 'New Year'. The next calving clinic is scheduled to be held in Valleyview sometime in February.

## Deputy Minister's Column



We are all aware that a successful outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations will result in a GATT agreement that will require changes in both federal and provincial agriculture policies and programs. Beginning in January 1993, the anticipated reduction in export and domestic subsidies and the opening up of domestic markets to foreign competition will provide both opportunity and challenges to the agriculture and food industry.

Change can be managed to advantage. Strategic management planning is a process designed for the proactive management of change. Alberta Agriculture's Strategic Management Plan is built on our vision of the industry and the challenges to the department. Based upon this vision, Executive Committee has established a strategic direction for the department as set out in our stated mission, businesses and goals. An important footnote to these statements is that Alberta Agriculture believes in its people, in planning and in partnerships.

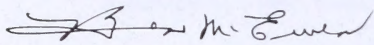
This year we are going public in the visioning process. Through consultations with stakeholders, our goal is to develop a shared vision of the agriculture and food industry for the 1990s and beyond.

(con't on page 4)



**Ken Beswick**, chairman of the Strategic Management Committee and I have invited agriculture and food organizations to form an industry advisory group to work with us in a consultation process over the coming months. It is hoped that this process will lead to the development of a common vision and direction for our industry.

I expect that some of you will be called on to help organize or participate in upcoming consultations. Given your positive response in the past, I have every confidence that you will welcome this opportunity to participate in the department's efforts to involve industry more closely in our strategic planning.



**H.B. McEwen**

## Tying on to Friday the 13th

**T**riskaidekaphobia paid a visit to the O.S. Longman Building, and may become an enduring method of dealing with the superstition-laden Friday the 13th.

The first ugly tie contest was conceived on the eve of September 1991's Friday the 13th. The phobia-bashing,

spirit-lightening contest returned in the year's last month with bigger fanfare. While contest-founder, **Bob Coleman** (horse specialist) was laid low by the season's flu bug, that didn't stop the staff on the ninth and sixth floors from raiding closets and also showing creativity for the second contest.

Guest judges **Don Macyk** (plant industry director) and **Bill Herbert** (head, regulatory services branch) trekked over from the J.G. O'Donoghue building to award prizes in three categories. The categories were created by the judges as they didn't receive any terms of reference. But, that apparently didn't bother the contestants who seemed to agree with judge Macyk's summation: "Thanks for the greatest amount of amusement I've had in a long time".

When the judges finally come to a decision: **Marilyn Touchette**, **Desmond Tang** and **Roy Smith** emerged with the ugly tie crowns.

Touchette won for the tie representing the greatest historic value. Her tie had been a gift to her husband on his twelfth birthday.

Tang received the creativity award in the judge's words for "uniqueness, effort in design and best use of government property". He added colorful designs to an old orange lab glove. While the judges named no runner's up, **Agknowledge** enjoyed

the yellow nylon noose tie with fold-back paper clips sported by **Barry Yaremcio**.

**Roy Smith's** story about his tie and a case of mistaken identity in Vegreville earned him honors for the best anecdotal tie. (For the story, ask Roy.)

## On the Move...

**W**elcome to the following people who have recently joined Alberta Agriculture:

**Paula Cheng, Roy Cody, Kandi Deering, Patricia Harrison, Steve Nicckoriuk, Bharti Patel, Sharon Peterson and Linda Touchette.**

### Transfers:

Fairview's new DA is **Mark Olsen** coming from Sangudo.

Good luck to the following people as they leave Alberta Agriculture: **Allen Krahn, Patrick Marce, Dr. Nick Nation, Anita Tymurski, Jim Wiebe, Linda Chase Wilde, Jelle Oevering and Ruth Winchell.**

We also bid farewell to **Jim Hironaka** who, after seven years with the Department, is retiring.

Deepest sympathies go out to the family of a former Alberta Agriculture employee **Al Reimer** who passed away on January 8, in Calgary.



The second annual ugly tie contest winners, (l) Roy Smith, Marilyn Touchette and Desmond Tang.

**Agknowledge** is published six times a year for the employees of Alberta Agriculture. Story ideas or letters to the editor should be sent to:

### Print Media Branch

J.G. O'Donoghue Building  
7000 - 113 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta

Telephone: (403) 427-2121

Fax: (403) 427-2861

Editor: Tracey Munro

Typesetting: Carolyn Boechler

Thanks to the following staff who made contributions to this issue. We appreciate it!

**Cathy Wolters, Edith Zawadiuk, Alex Ostapiuk, Marilyn Touchette, Mark George, Keith Price, Don Wentz and Yvonne Grabowsky.**





